

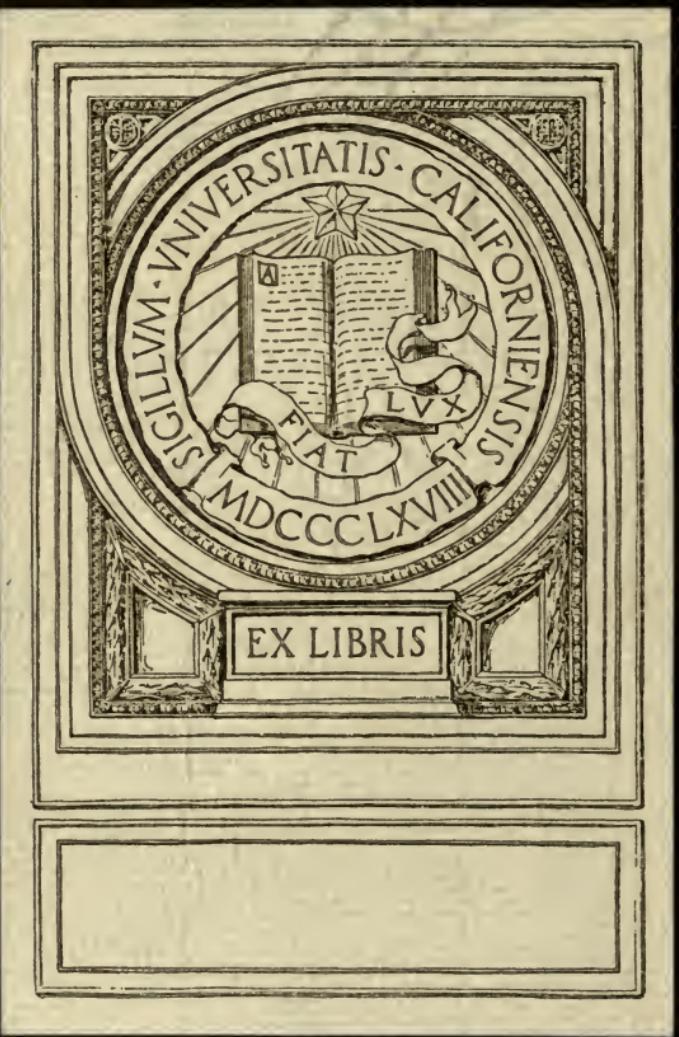
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# SPRUCE CONE and BUNCHBERRY

A Camp Fire Girls Play

BY

MARGARET C. GETCHELL



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Published By  
THE CAMP FIRE OUTFITTING CO.  
NEW YORK CITY



SPRUCE CONE  
AND  
BUNCHBERRY

A PLAY ABOUT AN UNPLEASANT FAMILY WHICH  
BECOMES PLEASANT WHEN THE CAMP FIRE  
SPIRIT ENTERS THE HOME

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TWELVE CHARACTERS

BY  
MARGARET C. GETCHELL



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# SPRUCE CONE and BUNCHBERRY

## CAST

(In the order of their appearance)

MRS. SHUBAL PINKHAM

PELEG PINKHAM\*

ELVIRA PINKHAM

MARTHA PINKHAM

MR. SHUBAL PINKHAM\*

ESTHER WHITCOMB

FIVE OR SIX COUNTRY GIRLS

(\**The parts of Peleg, a small boy, and Shubal, the father, can easily be taken by girls.*)

PLACE: Acts I and II—The Pinkham's kitchen or dining room. Act 3—A clearing in the woods.

TIME: The present.

Several weeks elapse between the first and the second, and between the second and the third acts.

## ACT I.

SCENE—*Kitchen or dining room of the Pinkham's farm. The room is bare, cluttered, and fairly clean but dingy. On the table is piled an array of dilapidated dishes ready for the next meal. The whole is shabby and unattractive. Mrs. Pinkham is mending a pair of overalls. She is thin and tired looking, as if worn out by drudgery and worry. Her face is without animation or interest.*

*Mrs. Pinkham, going to door and calling in a thin, shrill voice:* Hurry up with that water, Peleg; it's time

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SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

you was gittin' to your chores.

*Enter Peleg, a boy of twelve, with a pail of water in each hand.*

PELEG, *sulkily*: Well, I can't walk more'n just so fast when I'm luggin' a pail of water in each hand. There. (*setting them down*).

MRS. PINKHAM, *sitting down again*: Now go out and git some more wood.

PELEG: I got to git the cow first.

MRS. PINKHAM: No you haven't got to git the cow first. We've got to have the wood right now.

PELEG: You use an awful sight o' wood. Seems as though I didn't do nothin' but chop from the time I git up in the mornin' till I git to bed at night.

MRS. PINKHAM, *calling*: Elviry! Elviry! (*Exit Peleg. Enter Elvira, a sweet-looking girl of thirteen.*) Elviry, you'll hev' to git supper because I've got to patch your Pa's overalls afore he comes in. Them as he has on aren't fit to be seen if he goes down to the post office tonight. Now hustle up.

ELVIRA: Well, what'll I git? *Goes into pantry.*

MRS. PINKHAM: What is there in there?

ELVIRA: Nothin', fur as I can see, except some potatoes.

MRS. PINKHAM: Any bread?

ELVIRA: Half a loaf.

MRS. PINKHAM: Well, cook up enough potatoes to fill up the children. We'll take out a quart of milk afore we send it up to the village.

ELVIRA, *coming back*: Here's a can of tongue.

MRS. PINKHAM: The last one, isn't it?

ELVIRA: Yes.

MRS. PINKHAM: No, we'll save that and hev' it the night that girl from the city gits here. Goodness knows, I don't want her, but if she's got to come,

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

we'll give her one square meal when she gits here, for she's not like to git another.

ELVIRA: Say, who is she, anyway?

MRS. PINKHAM: Lan' knows; I don't. All I know about her is that your pa met her pa down at the horse races at the county fair. They got pretty chummy there and her pa told how he was a widower and had this one daughter who hung pretty heavy on his hands, particularly in the summer when there isn't any school, an' how she's pinin' to get up in the country. So your pa offered to take her for the summer.

ELVIRA: Didn't he tell you?

MRS. PINKHAM: Never told me a word about it till this mornin'. Just as though we didn't hav' enough troubles an' enough children of our own without takin' in other peoples'!

ELVIRA: Where's she goin' to sleep?

MRS. PINKHAM: Lan' knows! We haven't any room for her. Guess you'll hav' to give her your bed and sleep on the sofa. I'll take Marthy in with me.

ELVIRA: How old is she?

MRS. PINKHAM: Thirteen, I think.

ELVIRA: Say, ma——

MRS. PINKHAM: Yes——

ELVIRA, *hesitating*: I think it would be kind of nice to have a girl my age to play with. I haven't ever had any one livin' within two miles.

MRS. PINKHAM, *putting down her work*: That's so, Elviry, you don't hav' much fun, I guess. If pa made more money an' didn't throw away so much, perhaps I could look to it that you had more time for fun. But all I can do now is to git the two ends to meet with all of you helping, an' I'm afraid I don't pay much attention to anythin' else.

ELVIRA: What's her name?

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

MRS. PINKHAM: Lan', I was that upset with her comin', I didn't take no account of her name. *Rises, puts away work basket, and lays her hand half affectionately on Elvira's shoulder.* Now, don't set yer heart too much on her, Elviry. She's a city girl an' she may be too stuck up to play with you.

ELVIRA: Stuck up? Oh, I never thought of that!

*Enter Marthy, a little girl of nine, vivacious but pouty.*

MRS. PINKHAM: Marthy, if this girl comes up from the city, you're to sleep on the cot in my room and Elviry on the sofa, so as she can hev' your bed.

MARTHA: Oh dear, that's the most comf'able bed there is an' I don't like the cot. What does she hev' to come for? Nobody wants her. And I hate that cot. It's all bumps.

MRS. PINKHAM: Well, don't begin fretting about it now. She isn't comin' for a week, an' there are a lot o' worse thin's in this world than bumpy cots.

ELVIRA: Besides, she may be real nice—if she isn't stuck up. *Enter Mr. Pinkham. He is dressed as a farmer and wears a big straw hat which he does not take off. Without being positively disagreeable, he is brusque and irritable. Throughout the play he speaks with a drawl. The part can easily be taken by a girl.*

MR. PINKHAM: I want supper right off. I'm goin' down t' village.

MRS. PINKHAM: What you goin' for? Anything special? *Mr. Pinkham sits without answering. Enter Peleg. All sit down to supper.*

ELVIRA, *putting potatoes on table*: Pa, what's the girl's name?

MR. PINKHAM: What girl's?

ELVIRA: Why, the girl who's comin' here to board.

MR. PINKHAM, *spearing a potato with his fork*: Whit-comb.

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

ELVIRA: Oh, I mean her first name.

MR. PINKHAM: I dunno. I've got a letter from her here.

ELVIRA: Oh, let me read it.

*He hands it to her.*

PELEG: Read it out loud so's we c'n see what she's like.

ELVIRA, *reading*: "My dear friends: I hope you don't mind my calling you that because we will be friends so soon. I'm writing to say I'll arrive Tuesday (day after tomorrow) at 7:35 P. M."

MRS. PINKHAM: Lan' alive! That's tonight. An' she'll hev' to hev' some supper.

MR. PINKHAM: No, she won't. Go ahead and read the letter.

ELVIRA: "But don't wait dinner for me, because father says I'll have half an hour at Nashville and can get some there."

PELEG: Dinner! Golly, does she think we have two dinners a day?

MRS. PINKHAM: Mis' Skinner says thet lots of folks in the city hev' dinner at night instead of at noon.

MARTHA: Then they must have supper at noon, if—

ELVIRA, *interrupting*: Let me finish the letter. "I'm just so crazy to start I can hardly wait. I've never been to the country at all except to the park and on two hikes our Camp Fire had. You see, I'm a Camp Fire girl and we are supposed to know all about the country. You'll think I'm awfully ignorant because I don't know the names of hardly any flowers or birds. But I want to learn a lot of them if you will teach me." Why, I don't believe I know many myself.

MR. PINKHAM: You young 'uns don't hev time to go moonin' around after wild flowers. If you know the weeds, thet's all I ask. Josh Jenkins was tellin' me about his summer boarders t'other day—rusticators he

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

calls 'em. He says they go out with spy glasses an' walkin' canes, squintin' around the grass, an' half the time they're chasin' his chickens. One of 'em come home t'other day with a bunch of his squash blossoms to decorate the table.

*Children laugh.*

ELVIRA, *reading*: "Dad says you live very plainly and I am to make myself useful. I'll be awfully glad if you'll let me help with the housework."

PELEG: Humph! She's a queer critter!

ELVIRA: "You see, our Camp Fire has a cooking class, but we board, so I never get a chance to practice any—except in a chafing dish. So everything is going to be fun. Just think, only one more day! Till then, sincerely your friend, Esther Whitcomb. P. S. You can tell me at the station because I'll wear a blue hat with yellow flowers on it."

MR. PINKHAM, *gruffly*: Well, I hope she finds it as much of a lark as she thinks she will. *Enter Esther. She stands at door in back stage, valise in hand, face glowing with happiness and excitement. No one sees her.*) We c'n give her all the housework she wants an' I hope that'll satisfy her if she don't git anythin' else.

MRS. PINKHAM: You hadn't any business to tell her t' come. It's deceivin', that's what I say. You've made her think we've a fine farm an' are pinin' away for summer boarders. But we hevn't a farm you could call more'n decent, an' we don't want any boarders. We've got more'n we c'n do to feed our own children without takin' in others.

MR. PINKHAM: Wal', there's the four dollars a week——

MRS. PINKHAM: Yes, the four dollars a week, but I won't see any of it——

*Esther's radiant face has fallen as she listened. She*

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

*has quietly gone outside and now knocks.* Mrs. Pinkham stops talking, turns, and sees Esther.

ESTHER: Is—Is this Mrs. Pinkham?

MRS. PINKHAM, embarrassed: Yes.

ESTHER: I am Esther Whitcomb.

MR. PINKHAM: We warn't expectin' you till the seven thirty-five. I was a-goin' down t' meet it.

ESTHER: Well, you see I found I could get an earlier train at Nashville and (*speaking enthusiastically*) I was so crazy to get here I just took it, but—but I'm sorry if I inconvenienced you.

MRS. PINKHAM: Oh, it isn't any inconvenience because Pa hadn't started to hitch up.

MR. PINKHAM: Who'd ye git t' haul ye up the road?

ESTHER: Oh, the nicest old man! He said he was going right by the house. He lives with his sister and his brother, and his sister has a big flower garden and he puts lots of her flowers in tin cans so she can keep them in the house all winter. They have two bunnies and a cat with a whole lot of teeny-tiny kitties.

MR. PINKHAM: Must be one of the Leonard boys.

ESTHER: Oh, no; this was an old man. He had a white beard and must be most seventy.

MR. PINKHAM: That's Joe. Everybody allus called Joe and George the Leonard boys an' I callate they allus will, because they don't seem likely to git married now.

ESTHER: He asked me to come to see his sister's hydranga. I'd love to go, because he seems to know so much about everything.

MR. PINKHAM: Wal, I never heerd much 'bout Joe's knowledge, but he's a clever ole critter.

ESTHER: Clever?

MR. PINKHAM: Why, yes. He's good-natered enough, if he isn't very smart. Thet yer trunck out thar? (*Esther nods.*) I'll go haul it up. *Exit.*

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

MRS. PINKHAM: You hev'n't had any supper, I suppose?

ESTHER: No, I didn't have any time at Nashville. It—  
It's too bad I didn't wait, but they said I'd get here  
by six and I thought that would be in plenty of time  
for supper. I—I'm sorry I didn't wait.

MRS. PINKHAM: Oh, we'll get you some soon enough.  
Peleg, take that bag upstairs so's she can set down on  
that chair.

PELEG, *good-naturedly*: Sure.

ESTHER: Oh, thank you *so* much. I could take it up  
myself, but I've carried it all day and I'm so tired.  
*Exit Peleg with valise. Children have been standing  
about staring awkwardly. They seem rather pleased  
than otherwise with their inspection.*

MRS. PINKHAM: Marthy, you peal a couple of those  
potatoes an' put 'em on to b'il, while I go make up a  
bed.

*Exit Mrs. Pinkham. Esther sits down at table and  
pushes apart dishes, making a place for herself in the  
clutter. She is trying hard to keep a stiff upper lip.  
Elvira stands by, toying a spoon.*

ELVIRA, *bashfully*: I'm awful glad you've come. It will  
be lots of fun to have some one to play with.

ESTHER: Oh, that's so nice of you.

MARTHA: Why, you aren't crying, are you?

ESTHER, *wiping her eyes*: Oh dear, was I? Well, I  
didn't mean to. But I'm awfully tired. And it's so  
good to have some one want me.

*Baby cries—if possible.*

MRS. PINKHAM *from outside*: Marthy, come up and  
put baby to bed.

*Exit Marthy.*

ESTHER: Oh, there's a baby, how lovely! I just love  
to play with babies, although I don't know much about

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

taking care of them. But I'd like to learn, for Camp Fire, you know.

ELVIRA: Well, I can teach you that all right. I've had three of them to help with.

ESTHER, *with her former enthusiasm*: Oh, that will be great. We'll begin tomorrow.

*Esther picks up glass of milk which Elvira has poured out for her.*

MRS. PINKHAM, *from above*: And Elviry, get out that can of potted tongue.

### CURTAIN

### ACT II.

SCENE: *Same room as Act I, but it has changed its dingy appearance for a cheerful, homey look. There are wild flowers on the table and mantle, and a few bright calendar pictures on the wall. The side table is covered with new oil cloth, and the chairs seem to have been set in places which belong to them instead of having been left where they were last used. Martha is washing dishes, putting them into the cupboard instead of leaving them strewn about until the next meal. Her hair is more becomingly arranged and she has a cleaner, sprucier look. The same is true of Elvira, who is brushing up the floor. They are singing a Camp Fire song in parts as the curtain rises.*

TIME: *Several weeks later.*

MARTHA: You know, I don't mind washing dishes half as much as I used to. I s'pose it's because I know I'll get an honor for it, if I wash them for two months. Funny how much difference it makes!

ELVIRA: It all depends on how you go at it. Now, Esther seems to take work like as if it were a big game.

MARTHA: Well, it is to her. Wonder if she'd keep it up all the year around.

ELVIRA: I guess so. The harder she tackles a job, the

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

more she likes it. I don't believe she *could* get grouchy an' fuss over it the way we used to do. Don't believe we could either, now.

MARTHA: Course we couldn't. It's a waste of time. Where's Esther now?

*Elvira puts away broom and sits down with work basket and Peleg's overalls.*

ELVIRA: She's upstairs with baby. If she takes care of him an hour every day this month, she'll get a home craft honor.

MARTHA: That's a flame colored one like for washin' dishes, isn't it?

ELVIRA: Yes, she made some awful pretty ones this mornin' out of bunch berries.

MARTHA: For the lan' sakes, Elviry, what ails you to be patchin' those overalls when they haven't any holes in 'em!

ELVIRA, *holding them up to light*: Well, look how thin they are. They'll go right through the next time Peleg wears 'em, an' that'll mean a big job to patch 'em on the right side. So I'm puttin' a piece underneath to save nine stitches. I'm goin' to save enough "nines" for a hand craft honor. Esther's made some out of the little green cones on the spruce trees. I want *all* the colors on *my* necklace.

*Enter Esther dressed in sunbonnet and pinafore. She is as happy as when we first saw her on her appearance at the door.*

ESTHER, *excited*: I've got a surprise!

ELVIRA: Have you, really?

MARTHA: What is it?

ESTHER: I met Mr. Joe when I was out with baby, and he and Mr. George are crazy about coming to the picnic and they're going to bring—guess what they're going to bring.

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

MARTHA: Peanuts.

ESTHER: No; bigger'n peanuts.

ELVIRA: Plums.

ESTHER: Bigger'n plums.

MARTHA: Peaches.

ESTHER: Bigger'n peaches.

ELVIRA: Oh, I know; a pineapple.

ESTHER: Bigger'n a pineapple.

MARTHA: I dunno anythin' bigger'n a pineapple, unless it's a squash.

ESTHER: No; a watermelon, *of course*.

ELVIRA: A watermelon?

MARTHA: A whole watermelon?

ESTHER: Yes, a whole one and the very biggest one he could get at the store. He was taking it home in a wheelbarrow. He wasn't going to tell me, but he says I eyed it 'spiciously. I don't believe I did at all, but he just couldn't keep the secret. The watermelon's so big we can't ever eat half of it. *Begins to dust*.

MARTHA: You never saw Peleg put away watermelon. He won't leave anythin' but the seeds.

ESTHER: We can have a battle with the seeds.

ELVIRA: No, I'll tell you what we can do with them. They dry out kind of brownish and we can save them for camp craft honors.

ESTHER: Speaking of honors, I can't find anything for nature lore except blueberries and they shrivel right up. Isn't it funny that with all the green and yellow in nature there doesn't seem to be any straight blue?

ELVIRA: We'll have to use blueberries and string 'em over every time we have a meetin'.

MARTHA: It's too bad we can't have real beads like they have in the city.

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

ESTHER: Oh, it doesn't make much difference. They're only symbols anyway. It isn't what they are, but the things we do that they stand for that counts. And nothing could be nicer for a Camp Fire in this lovely country than spruce cone and bunchberry.

*Enter Peleg with bird-house he has made.*

PELEG: There, how's that for the birds? Isn't that pretty squeejunk? *Girls are delighted.*

MARTHA, *dancing around it*: Oh, it's perfectly fine!

ESTHER: It's just dandy!

ELVIRA: The birds will love it.

PELEG: I read in a book how you should leave it out all winter, 'cause that's when the birds can't find any grub. And Pa taught me the sixth kind of cow today, so there's another honor.

*(Exit Elvira with overalls.)*

MARTHA: I never thought he knew so much about animals an' flowers an' things. Sunday afternoon in the woods he taught me to tell nine different kinds of trees by their bark.

PELEG: He does know a lot. Why, we had as much fun as two boys tramping around after the picnic. He says he used to like to go pokin' around outdoors, but he'd got out of the way of it now an' had almost forgotten there was anythin' grown' on the farm except garden truck. I wish your book could have more honors that I could win. *(Exit Martha.)*

ESTHER: Oh, Peleg, I meant to tell you the very first thing when you came in—I had a letter from our Camp Fire guardian at home and she's going to send you a real boy scout book.

PELEG, *throwing up his cap*: Hoorah!

ESTHER: I suppose you really ought not to belong to our Camp Fire, nor Martha either. She ought to be a blue bird. But as long as there aren't any boy

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

scouts or blue birds, and our's isn't a *real* Camp Fire, anyway, I guess it's all right.

*Enter Mr. Pinkham.*

MR. PINKHAM: Better lay in some more wood, Peleg; it looks over'n the east as though we'd git some rain afore mornin'.

PELEG: All right. *Exit.*

ESTHER: Oh, you don't think it will rain for the picnic tomorrow, do you?

MR. PINKHAM: Wal, it might, an' then agin' it mightn't. It's blowin' like old Sam Hill out t'other side the barn.

ESTHER: Oh, I hope it doesn't rain. Mr. Joe and Mr. George are going too.

MR. PINKHAM: The Leonard b'ys on a picnic! Wal, I'll be swan! You'll be askin' me to go 'long next, I suppose.

ESTHER: Ask you? Why, of *course*, you're going. We couldn't think of having a picnic without *you*.

MR. PINKHAM: You couldn't! Sho'!

ESTHER: And besides, you're teaching Martha and Peleg all sorts of things and I want to get some more honors, too.

MR. PINKHAM: You'll be settin' me to work for honors, ef I don't look out for you.

ESTHER: Oh, *would* you like to belong? Well, we've Peleg and Martha so we might as well have you. Of course our Camp Fire isn't real, so we can take in everybody. (*Taking down Camp Fire book.*) Now, I'll find you an honor to work for. What color do you want?

MR. PINKHAM, *amused*: Oh, I dunno.

ESTHER: You must know what is your favorite color.

MR. PINKHAM: Wal, yellar.

ESTHER: All right. That is for business honors. Let's

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

see—"Regular position—save 10% of allowance—be 'on time for business—attend a class or lecture.' There don't seem to be any here that fit. Oh, here's one: "Keep a bank account for three months; draw checks, endorse checks, make deposits and balance check book with bank book each month." Oh, that will be fine!

MR. PINKHAM: Sho'! I don't hev' any bank account. I spend my money 'bout as quick as I c'n git it. If I ever hev' any left over in the spring, I put it away in a tin box agin' a rainy day.

ESTHER: Oh, then I know just the thing! Keep a cash account. That will do just as well as long as you don't have banks in the country. Or do you keep a cash account already?

MR. PINKHAM: No, I don't.

ESTHER: That's good. It'll be such fun to start. Our guardian showed me how to last year and it looks awfully pretty. You have to have two pens and red ink and black ink. Then you rule down and put your debits in black ink and your credits in red. Here's a blank book of mine that's half empty. *Puts book before him on table.*

MR. PINKHAM: You mean I've got to put down there every time I buy a chug o' tobaccy or treat the boys up t' the village? (*Esther nods.*) Wal, I dunno's I like that. Ma says I spend money kinder senseless, and I dunno's I want t' see it down in black an' white.

ESTHER: Oh, but you can spend just as much. It's only that you have to put it down.

MR. PINKHAM: An' what do I git for all that work?

ESTHER: I'm going to make business honors out of corn—the kind that has the big yellow kernels, you know.

MR. PINKHAM: Wal, ye're the queerest young 'un I ever laid eyes on. All that work for a kernal of corn an' I got a whole bin full out in the corn house.

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

ESTHER, *anxiously*: But you'll do it, won't you?

MR. PINKHAM: I callate I'll have to to keep peace in the family.

ESTHER, *bending over his book*: Oh, goodie! Now take that ruler and draw a line from here—to here. No, you'll have to hold the ruler this way or it will blot.  
*Enter Mrs. Pinkham with a bag of stockings.*

MRS. PINKHAM: For the lan' sakes, Shubal, what are you doin' with that note book? You aren't settin' him to keepin' a diary, are you, Esthy?

MR. PINKHAM, *sheepishly*: Wal, not exactly. I'm a candidate for this y'er club of her'n.

ESTHER: Yes, and if you would be one, too, we would have a regular family Camp Fire. Wouldn't that be fun? Oh, Mrs. Pinkham, I have a perfectly splendid scheme! You can be guardian!

MR. PINKHAM: I reckon you'll hev' the Leonard b'y's in next.

ESTHER: Why, that's a dandy idea, too, Mr. Pinkham. We'll ask them at the picnic. They could get all the nature lore honors, because they know just everything about birds and flowers and animals. Shall we show Mrs. Pinkham—

MR. PINKHAM: Wal, I'm 'fraid I'll hev' to be moggin' along ef I'm goin' to git my spuds dug afore sundown.

ESTHER: All right, we'll go on after supper. I'll get the girls now and tell them about the family Camp Fire and the guardian. I know they'll be crazy about it. *Exit, running.*

MR. PINKHAM: Wal, want-know! What'll she be up to next?

MRS. PINKHAM: I'm sure I don't know. Isn't she the greatest young 'un?

MR. PINKHAM: Let me tell you right now, that critter isn't nobody's fool!

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

*Exit Mr. Pinkham. Mrs. Pinkham has sat down and is darning stockings. Esther, Martha and Elvira run in and sit down on the floor around her.*

ESTHER, making Indian sign for hail: Hail, guardian!

MRS. PINKHAM: Oh, I don't believe I could be guardian.

ELVIRA, disappointed: Oh, why not, Ma?

MRS. PINKHAM: Well, I'm not much of a hand at clubs an' sech things, an' I wouldn't know what to do.

MARTHA: Oh, it's all in Esther's book. And you want to, don't you, Ma?

MRS. PINKHAM: Why, yes, of course——

ESTHER: Then that is settled. Now the next thing to do is to get names.

MARTHA: What's the matter with the ones we've got? Aren't they good enough?

ESTHER: Oh, no; we each have to have an Indian name with a meaning that fits us 'speciafly.

ELVIRA: Where can we get 'em?

ESTHER: In books on Indian lore.

MARTHA: But we haven't any.

ELVIRA: An' I don't see how we can get any.

ESTHER: Well, we'll have to find *some* way.

MRS. PINKHAM: I know where there may be some.

ALL: Where?

MRS. PINKHAM: In *Hiawatha*.

ESTHER: Oh, that would be splendid!

MARTHA: But we haven't any *Hiawatha*.

MRS. PINKHAM: Yes, we have. It's in that book of Longfellow in the front parlor, Marthy. *Martha runs out for it.* Your pa an' I used to read it on winter evenin's when we were first married. But we got all out of the notion of it when things began goin' harder an' we had bad luck with the crops for sech

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

a spell. I allus kind o' liked poetry.

*Enter Martha with the book, and gives it to Mrs. Pinkham.*

MRS. PINKHAM: Here's *Hiawatha*. I can open right to it, though I haven't had the book in my hands for nigh unto ten years.

ESTHER: Now, you read aloud, and we'll stop you when we get to a name we like.

MRS. PINKHAM: Oh, I can't do that. I haven't read aloud sence Marthy was a little tot so high. An' I hev' to get the stockin's darned before supper time.

ESTHER: Oh, we can do the stockings in no time at all. Here Marthy. *Laughing and tossing her a handful of stockings.*

MARTHA: All right.

*Girls all thread needles and go to work. Mrs. Pinkham takes up book again.*

MRS. PINKHAM, looking down into Esther's laughing face: I have a name for you, Esther, before I start. Minnehaha—for laughing water.

## CURTAIN

## ACT III.

SCENE: A clearing in the woods. Esther, Elvira and Martha are laying camp fire. Esther and Elvira wear Camp Fire costumes. (If impossible to have the outdoor scenery, the act can be laid, though less effectively, around the fire place in the Pinkhams' front parlor.)

TIME: Several weeks later.

ESTHER: Isn't it wonderful to think that we are starting a real Camp Fire group. Who would have thought that all the girls in the neighborhood would get interested in our play Camp Fire, and that it would grow into this? I am so tickled to think that I can be here for the first council fire.

ELVIRA: So am I. I never could manage it without you.

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

ESTHER: Oh, yes, you could. I think you know more about it now than I do. And your mother is a perfectly splendid guardian. She is just as enthusiastic about every plan as any of us are.

MARTHA: I met Jane Simpkins up t' the village this mornin', and she is goin' to belong too. She says she won't mind walkin' the three miles each time for the meetin's. Isn't that fine?

ESTHER, *putting her arm around Martha*: You're a perfect peach, Marthy, to be so enthusiastic when you can't belong. But remember, you are our blue bird and you can come to all the picnics and everything that is allowed.

MARTHA: Oh, never mind. It won't be very long before I'm twelve. I'm most nine an' three quarters now.

ELVIRA: Here's our guardian now.

*Enter Mrs. Pinkham.*

MRS. PINKHAM: The girls are waiting. You'd better go get them.

*Exeunt girls. After a minute Esther, Elvira and five or six other girls file in slowly, dressed in Camp Fire costumes. They and the guardian make the hand sign of fire, and from now on perform the Camp Fire ceremony in the regulation way. They use their own ceremonial names as the most appropriate, except Esther (Minnehaha) and Elvira (Nevadada, sweet singer, from Hiawatha). Esther lights the fire. It can be made by a red electric bulb, if the house is wired. Flash the current on and off to make fire flicker. While Esther lights fire, girls sing: Burn, Fire, Burn.*

ALL: "O Fire!

Long years ago when our fathers fought with great animals  
you were their protection.

From the cruel cold of winter, you saved them.

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

When they needed food you changed the flesh of beasts  
into savory meat for them.

During all the ages your mysterious flame has been a  
symbol to them for Spirit.

So (tonight) we light our fire in remembrance of the  
Great Spirit who gave you to us."

MRS. PINKHAM, *lighting taper and handing it to Elvira:*  
Nevadada, will you light the light of work?

ELVIRA, *having stepped to center of circle and knelt on  
one knee:* "I light the light of work, for Wohelo  
means work."

"We glorify work, because through work we are free.  
We work to win, to conquer, to be masters.  
We work for the joy of the working, and because we  
are free.

Wohelo means work."

*She hands taper to Mrs. Pinkham who gives it to  
another girl.*

MRS. PINKHAM—————(ceremonial name) : Will  
you light the light of health?

GIRL: "I light the light of health, for Wohelo means  
health." *Stepping forward, etc.*

We hold on to health, because through health we serve  
and are happy. In caring for the health and beauty  
of our persons we are caring for the very shrine of the  
Great Spirit. Wohelo means health.

MRS. PINKHAM, *handing taper, etc.:* Will you light the  
light of love?

GIRL, *after coming forward, etc.:* "I light the light of  
love, for Wohelo means love."

"We love Love, for love is life, and light and joy and  
sweetness. And love is comradeship and motherhood,  
and fatherhood and all dear kinship. Love is the joy  
of service so deep that self is forgotten. Wohelo  
means love."

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

*The girls join in singing "Wohelo for Aye."*

*The roll call follows. The girls use their own ceremonial names (except Esther and Elvira) as suggested above.*

**MRS. PINKHAM:** As this is our first meeting, there isn't any count to be read. I appoint Nevadada and \_\_\_\_\_ to write the count for next time. This is our first council fire, and as guardian I want to tell you what the Camp Fire means. The law of the Camp Fire you all know:

"Seek beauty

Give service

Pursue knowledge

Be trustworthy

Hold on to health

Glorify work

Be happy."

Three months ago, all that wouldn't have meant anythin' to me except so many words, but the best way to understand a thing is to see it worked out. And that's what I've done. When our little Camp Fire girl came to us, we were just about as grouchy and uncomfortable a family to live with as could be found anywhere about, and for no reason in the world, but that we had shut our eyes to the beauties and pleasures that lay within our reach. Unconsciously she has opened our eyes and has led us to seek beauty, to give service, to glorify work (the very same work we thought was such a hardship then), and to be happy in a fine, wholesome way. We have made the discovery that we have the three greatest blessings on earth—work, health and love—and we wonder now why we haven't always known so simple a truth. I wrote something like this to the national headquarters when I sent my application. I'll read their answer:

## SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

*Reading:* "Dear Mrs. Pinkham: We are very much interested in your plans for a Camp Fire group and enclose your charter. We send also some 'Blue Bird' literature for Martha, and have spoken with some of the 'Blue Birds' here about her. They are going to ask her to become a corresponding member of their 'nest'. We are delighted with what you say or your little Minnehaha. She has done the greatest service possible for the Camp Fire Girls by carrying their ideals into a new family and hence into a community. We can never fully repay that service, but send her as a token of our appreciation a national honor."

Minnehaha, by authority vested in me as Guardian of the Fire, I award you this symbol of attainment. It is the first honor awarded in our Camp Fire. May there be many others to follow in the path you have blazed.

ESTHER: Oh, Mrs. Pinkham, it's lovely, but you give me too much credit. You don't know what it's been to a girl brought up in a city boarding house to spend a summer out in the big country and to live in a realy-truly family where she can love and be loved. Tonight is such a happy ending to a happy summer, but I hate to think that it is the end and that I have to go home tomorrow.

*Mrs. Pinkham gives her the honor, leaning over and kissing her. At a signal from Elvira the girls rise and sing to Esther the following song to the tune of Juanita:*

Sadly we're singing,  
For we're loath to bid adieu.  
Gladly we're bringing  
Pledge of friendship true—  
For distance ne'er can sever  
Our bond; where'er you dwell

SPRUCE CONE AND BUNCHBERRY

Be one of us forever. (*Pause*)

Call this not farewell!

Listen, Minnehaha!

Westward turn at evenfall.

Hear us, Minnehaha! (*Dimmuendo and retard.*)

Hear our distant call.

CURTAIN



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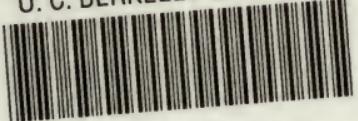
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